of independence has now increased to nearly 48 lakhs and the Department proposes to provide an additional 52 lakhs new telephone connections during the 8th Plan, the number of telephones per 100 population is still less than two.

(c) New technology namely electronic exchanges are being installed and full use is made of these exchanges. However, the capacity of the ITI, Mankapur is only 5 lakhs lines per year.

The benefit of new technology can be fully realised only when a major portion of the network is digitalised. Every effort is being made to expand the digital network as fast as possible subject to the constraints regarding equipment and funds.

(d) 50 per cent concession is available to subscriber dialled calls between 19 and 22 hours and 6 to 8 hours. The charges are still lower for S.T.D. calls made between 22 hours and 6 hours when only 25 per cent of normal charge is levied.

(e) The charges for various telephone services have been kept as low as possible. Any increase has generally been to neutralise the increase in cost of providing the service and for generating adequate surplus to expand and modernise the network.

"RLU" Systems in Telephone Exchanges in Calcutta

916. PROF. SOURENDRA BHATTACHARJEE: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Calcutta Telephones have set up "RLU" systems in various exchanges in Calcutta;

(b) whether some of the old exchanges *viz.* '45' and '46' have completely failed to provide service to the subscribers;

(c) whether more than 50 per cent telephone lines of these exchanges remain out of service;

(d) whether complaints of the subcribers are not being properly attended; and

(e) if so, the details thereof and further action to be taken to immediately install "RLU" systems in these exchanges?

THE MINISTER OF STATE (INDEPENDENT CHARGE) IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI JANESHWAR MISHRA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) No, Sir. However, the exchanges have outlived their rated lives and plans have been prepared to replace these exchanges by electronic Remote Line Units.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) No, Sir. All efforts are made to quickly restore the lines to ensure redressal of complaints.

(e) Does not arise.

Fire Protection Measures in the Office Buildings of Posts and Telecommunications Department in the Country

917 PROF. SOURENDRA BHATTACHARJEE: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the buildings and multistoried office premises of the departments of Posts and Telecommunications Department in the country do not have adequate fire protection measures to prevent fire accidents;

(b) whether the Departments own civil wing has not yet developed its own measures of safety and/or to work and observe the prescribed fire safety rules;

(c) whether none of the premises has fire protection doors;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) what further action is proposed to be taken to make use of fire protection doors and other fire preventive measures?

THE MINISTER OF STATE (INDEPENDENT CHARGE) IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI JANESHWAR MISHRA): (a) No, Sir. Fire protection measures are provided in the Departmental buildings according to the fire bye-laws and the standards in force.

(b) The Department has developed its own fire protection manual and instructions which are in line with the provisions in the National Buildings code and Fire bye-laws.

(c) No, Sir. The doors are provided as per the requirements of the fire bye-laws in force.

(d) Does not arise.

(e) Action to make use of fire protection doors and other preventive measures is already being taken according to the standards and guidelines.

Amendment of Rules regarding Fire Safety in Buildings etc.

918. PROF. SOURENDRA BHATTACHARJEE: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to amend the existing fire safety rules for public places and premises, for multi-storied buildings, hotels and hospitals keeping in view the increasing occurrences of fire incidents;

(b) whether it is a fact that the rules are not strictly followed in Metropolitan towns and cities in the country due to laxity on the part of concerned authorities;

(c) whethero opinion of the Central Building Research Institute, Roorkee, has been sought for use of fire proof doors/windows to prevent fire accidents;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) the expeditious action taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI SUBODH KANT SAHAY): (a) As the Fire Services are under the State Governments and Municipalities, the Central Government have not framed any such Rules, which require amendment by the Centre. 'Fire' being a State subject State Government have been requested by this Ministry to enact the Fire Force Act for which a Model Legislation was also circulated. The Ministry of Urban Development, have also circulated a National Building Code of India which *inter-alia* contains measures to be followed on Fire Safety.

(b) Fire being a State subject, it is for the State Governments and Municipal Authorities to check laxity if any on the part of the concerned authorities to enforce fire safety rules.

(c) to (e) The Central Building Research Institute, Roorkee has developed fire retardant self extinguishing treatments for wooden doors, windows and partitions. The literature on the subject was sent to Ministry of Industry for developing the material industrially. The Central Building Reearch Institute has also been requested by the Directorate General of Technical Development to approach National Research Development Corporation, for commercialising fire retardants developed by the Institute.

Policy on Punjab

919. SHRI SHIV PRATAP MISHRA: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have changed its policy of dealing with Punjab situation politically and has now given free hand to police to deal with terrorists;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI SUBODH KANT SAHAY):